

Notice of Preparation

To: Office of Planning and Research
State Clearinghouse

(Agency)

1400 Tenth Street, Room 121
Sacramento, CA 95814

(Address)

Attn: Mr. Scott Morgan

FILED
RIVERSIDE COUNTY

MAR 07 2005

By R. Anderson R. Anderson
Deputy

Subject: Notice of Preparation of a Draft Environmental Impact Report

Lead Agency:

Agency Name California Department of Transportation
(Department)

Street Address 464 West Fourth Street

City/State/Zip San Bernardino, CA 92401-1400

Contact Marie J. Petry

Consulting Firm (If applicable):

Firm Name

CH2M HILL

Street Address 3 Hutton Centre Drive, Suite 200

City/State/Zip Santa Ana, CA 92707

Contact Carolyn Washburn

California Department of Transportation (Department) will be the Lead Agency and will prepare a joint Environmental Impact Statement/Environmental Impact Report (EIS/EIR) for the project identified below. We need to know the views of your agency as to the scope and content of the environmental information that is germane to your agency's statutory responsibilities in connection with the proposed project. Your agency will need to use the EIS/EIR prepared by our agency when considering your permit or other approval for the project.

It has been determined in accordance with Division 13, Public Resources Code, Section 21080(d) that there is substantial evidence that the project may have a significant effect on the environment. The implementation of the project potentially may result in significant impacts on aesthetics, agricultural resources, air quality, biological resources, cultural resources, hazards and hazardous materials, hydrology and water quality, land use and planning, noise, public services, recreation, transportation/traffic, and utilities and services systems. The joint EIS/EIR for the proposed project will address the complete list of environmental topics contained in Appendix G of the 2004 California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines.

Based on the potential significant effects identified above, no initial study is required. California Code of Regulations, Title 14, Section 15060(d) states:

If the lead agency can determine that an EIR will be clearly required for a project, the agency may skip further initial review of the project and begin work directly on the EIR process described in Article 9. In the absence of an initial study, the lead agency shall still focus the EIR on the significant effects of the project and indicate briefly its reasons for determining that other effects would not be significant or potentially significant.

Due to the time limits mandated by state law, your response must be sent at the earliest possible date but **not later than 30 days** after receipt of this notice.

Please send your response to: Agency Name Riverside County Transportation Commission

Street Address 4080 Lemon Street, 3rd Floor

City/State/Zip Riverside, CA 92501

Contact Hideo Sugita

Telephone: (951) 787-7141 E-mail: hsugita@rctc.org

COUNTY CLERK
Neg Declaration/Ntc Determination
Filed per P.R.C. 21152
POSTED

MAR 07 2005

4-7-05

Removed:
By: Y. Marshall Dept.
County of Riverside, State of California

SCO/BS1801.DOC/050410004

We will need the name for a contact person in your agency. Project documents are available for review on the project website, located at <http://www.sr79project.info>. This website contains project information and will be updated as the project progresses.

A project scoping meeting will be held in Hemet on Wednesday, September 29, 2004 at the James Simpson Memorial Center (305 E. Devonshire Avenue) beginning at 6:30 p.m. and in San Jacinto on Wednesday, October 6, 2004 at the San Jacinto Unified School District conference room (2045 San Jacinto Avenue) beginning at 6:30 p.m.

Project Location: The proposed project is located in western Riverside County and includes that portion of SR 79 2 kilometers (km) south of Domenigoni Parkway to Gilman Springs Road. The proposed project will occur in the community of Winchester, the cities of Hemet and San Jacinto, as well as unincorporated Riverside County.

City (nearest)

County

Project Description: (brief)

The Riverside County Transportation Commission (RCTC), in cooperation with District 8 of the California Department of Transportation, the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), the County of Riverside, the City of San Jacinto, and the City of Hemet, will prepare a joint Environmental Impact Statement/Environmental Impact Report (EIS/EIR) for the realignment of State Route (SR) 79 (Project) in the vicinity of the cities of Hemet and San Jacinto in Riverside County, California. The realignment is proposed to occur 2 km south of Domenigoni Parkway to Gilman Springs Road.

A range of alignment alternatives will be analyzed in the EIS/EIR. Alignment alternatives in the western, central, and eastern portions of the project area were identified through an alternatives analysis process described in detail in the Project Criteria and Alternatives Selection for Preliminary Agreement (June 22, 2004); and these alignment alternatives will be analyzed.

The western alignment begins at the southern project limit along Winchester Road, approximately 2 km south of Domenigoni Parkway. It continues north crossing Domenigoni Parkway and Salt Creek Channel, ½-mile east of Winchester Road. The alignment then turns east and parallels Florida Avenue on the south before turning north, paralleling and then crossing the San Diego Canal near Esplanade Avenue. North of Esplanade Avenue, the western alignment continues in a northeast direction and splits into two potential alignments, one following Odell Avenue and one paralleling the Casa Loma Canal, before reconnecting immediately south of the intersection of Sanderson Avenue and North Ramona Boulevard. The western alignment continues north on Sanderson Avenue and crosses Ramona Expressway to the San Jacinto River.

The central alignment begins at the southern project limit along Winchester Road and continues in a northeast direction crossing Domenigoni Parkway and continuing east paralleling Salt Creek Channel. It then travels north, east of the San Diego Canal. North of Devonshire Avenue, the central alignment will occur on top of Warren Road, west of Tres Cerritos Hills to Seventh Street. Then the alignment heads northeast to parallel the Casa Loma Canal until Sanderson Avenue. Then, the central alignment continues north, east of Sanderson Avenue, and crosses Ramona Expressway to the San Jacinto River.

The eastern alignment begins at the southern project limit along Winchester Road and continues north, turning northeast after crossing the Salt Creek Channel. The alignment continues northeast paralleling the railroad tracks until Sanderson Avenue. Northeast of the Hemet-Ryan Airport, the eastern alignment turns north in the vicinity of Sanderson Avenue. The alignment continues north along Sanderson Avenue and crosses Ramona Expressway to the San Jacinto River.

The above described realignment alternatives will be further refined through efforts conducted under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA)/404 Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) Integration Process, incorporating comments from the public scoping process, as well as analysis in technical studies. In addition to the build alternatives, a no-build alternative also will be reviewed in the EIS/EIR as required by NEPA and California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) regulations.

Date March 2, 2005

Signature

Marie J. Retey

Title

Senior Environmental Planner

Telephone (909) 383-6379

Reference: California Code of Regulations, Title 14 (CEQA Guidelines) Sections 15082(a), 15103, 15375.

January 2000

ENCLOSURE: Letter Enclosure to State Route 79 Realignment Project (SCH #2004091040) Notice of Preparation, Posted by Office of Planning and Research, State Clearinghouse on September 9, 2004 and County of Riverside County Clerk on September 10, 2004.

SCO/BS1801.DOC/050410004

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION**DISTRICT 8****ENVIRONMENTAL PLANNING (MS 821)**464 WEST 4TH STREET, 6TH FLOOR
SAN BERNARDINO, CA 92401-1400

PHONE (909) 383-6379

FAX (909) 383-6494

TTY (909) 383-6300

*Flex your power!
Be energy efficient!*

March 2, 2005

Ms. Cindy Kohler
County of Riverside Assessor-
County Clerk-Recorder Office
2724 Gateway Drive
Riverside, CA 92507

Dear Stakeholder:

The Riverside County Transportation Commission (RCTC) (Project proponent), in cooperation with District 8 of the California Department of Transportation (Department) (State Lead Agency under California Environmental Quality Act [CEQA]), the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) (Federal Lead Agency under National Environmental Policy Act [NEPA]), the County of Riverside, the City of San Jacinto, and the City of Hemet has proposed a project for the realignment of State Route 79 (SR-79) (proposed Project) in the vicinity of the cities of Hemet and San Jacinto within Riverside County, California.

A letter of invitation to participate in the public scoping process and a newsletter, describing the proposed Project and announcing the occurrence of two public scoping meetings held in September and October 2004, were distributed on September 7, 2004. In accordance with NEPA and CEQA, a Notice of Intent (NOI) to prepare an Environmental Impact Statement and a Notice of Preparation (NOP) soliciting public participation in determining the scope of the Environmental Impact Report were published. The NOI was published in the *Federal Register* on Tuesday, September 7, 2004. The NOP was distributed to state reviewing agencies by the California Office of Planning and Research, State Clearinghouse (SCH), on Thursday, September 9, 2004; and the proposed Project was assigned SCH #2004091040. The NOP was also filed and posted by the County of Riverside County Clerk on Friday, September 10, 2004. A thirty-day comment period was established when these notices were published.

The Department is providing supplemental notice of the proposed Project under its existing SCH #2004091040 to the SCH, County of Riverside County Clerk, and proposed Project stakeholders. No changes to the proposed Project have occurred since the original NOP distribution in September 2004. This supplemental distribution is not intended to provide new or updated information but, instead, to provide an extended opportunity for public comment on the proposed Project. This letter is provided for your information as an enclosure to the original NOP distributed for the proposed Project (SCH #2004091040) in September 2004.

"Caltrans improves mobility across California"

Stakeholder
March 2, 2005
Page 2

RCTC will continue to accept comments regarding the proposed Project during the thirty-day comment period established through supplemental distribution and noticing of the NOP. Comments on the proposed Project can be directed to:

Mr. Hideo Sugita
Riverside County Transportation Commission
P.O. Box 12008
Riverside, CA 92502-2208
Telephone: (951) 787-7141
Fax: (951) 787-7920
SR-79 Project website: <http://www.sr79project.info>

Sincerely,



MARIE J. PETRY
Office Chief
Environmental Studies/Support A



Arnold
Schwarzenegger
Governor

STATE OF CALIFORNIA
Governor's Office of Planning and Research
State Clearinghouse and Planning Unit



Sean Walsh
Director

Notice of Preparation

March 4, 2005

To: Reviewing Agencies

Re: State Route 79 Realignment Project from Domenigoni Parkway to Gilman Springs Road
SCH# 2004091040

Attached for your review and comment is the Notice of Preparation (NOP) for the State Route 79 Realignment Project from Domenigoni Parkway to Gilman Springs Road draft Environmental Impact Report (EIR).

Responsible agencies must transmit their comments on the scope and content of the NOP, focusing on specific information related to their own statutory responsibility, within 30 days of receipt of the NOP from the Lead Agency. This is a courtesy notice provided by the State Clearinghouse with a reminder for you to comment in a timely manner. We encourage other agencies to also respond to this notice and express their concerns early in the environmental review process.

Please direct your comments to:

Marie J. Petry
Department of Transportation, District 8
464 W. 4th Street
San Bernardino, CA 92401-1400

with a copy to the State Clearinghouse in the Office of Planning and Research. Please refer to the SCH number noted above in all correspondence concerning this project.

If you have any questions about the environmental document review process, please call the State Clearinghouse at (916) 445-0613.

Sincerely,

Scott Morgan
Project Analyst, State Clearinghouse

Attachments
cc: Lead Agency



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State Route 79 Realignment Project from Domenigoni Parkway to Gilman Springs Road

SCH Number: 2004091040

Type: NOP - Notice of Preparation

Project Description

The Riverside County Transportation Commission (RCTC), in cooperation with District 8 of the California Department of Transportation, the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), the County of Riverside, the City of San Jacinto, and the City of Hemet, will prepare a joint Environmental Impact Statement/Environmental Impact Report (EIS/EIR) for the realignment of State Route (SR) 79 (Project) in the vicinity of the cities of Hemet and San Jacinto in Riverside County, California. The realignment is proposed to occur 2 km south of Domenigoni Parkway to Gilman Springs Road. A range of alignment alternatives will be analyzed in the EIS/EIR. Alignment alternatives in the western, central, and eastern portions of the project area were identified through an alternatives analysis process described in detail in the Project Criteria and Alternatives Selection for Preliminary Agreement (June 22, 2004); and these alignment alternatives will be analyzed.

Project Lead Agency

Caltrans #8

Contact Information

Primary Contact:

Marie J. Petry
Department of Transportation, District 8
(909) 383-6379
464 W. 4th Street
San Bernardino, CA 92401-1400

Project Location

County: Riverside
City: Hemet, San Jacinto
Region:
Cross Streets: Domenigoni Pkwy. / Simpson Rd. / Florida Ave. / SR 74 / Warren Rd. / Esplanade Ave. / Cottonwood
Parcel No:
Township: 4-6S
Range: 1-2W
Section: 1, 3-4
Base: SBBM
Other Location Info:

Proximity To

Highways: SR 79, SR 74
Airports: Hemet-Ryan Airport
Railways: San Jacinto Branch Line
Waterways: Casa Loma Canal, Colorado River Aqueduct, Salt Creek Channel, San Diego Canal, San Jacinto River
Schools:
Land Use: Agricultural, Open Space, Developed Urban Uses, Infrastructure

Development Type

Transportation: Local Road

Local Action

General Plan Amendment, Rezone, Use Permit, Other Action

Project Issues

Aesthetic/Visual, Agricultural Land, Air Quality, Archaeologic-Historic, Cumulative Effects, Economics/Jobs, Flood Plain/Flooding, Forest Land/Fire Hazard, Geologic/Seismic, Landuse, Minerals, Noise, Other Issues, Population/Housing Balance, Public Services, Schools/Universities, Septic System, Sewer Capacity, Soil Erosion/Compaction/Grading, Solid Waste, Toxic/Hazardous, Traffic/Circulation, Vegetation, Water Quality, Water Supply, Wetland/Riparian, Wildlife, Growth Inducing, Social, Recreation/Parks

Reviewing Agencies (Agencies in **Bold Type** submitted comment letters to the State Clearinghouse)

Resources Agency; Regional Water Quality Control Board, Region 8; Department of Parks and Recreation; Native American Heritage Commission; Integrated Waste Management Board; **Public Utilities Commission**; Office of Emergency Services; Department of Health Services; Department of General Services; Office of Historic Preservation; Department of Fish and Game, Region 6; Department of Water Resources; **Department of Conservation**; **California Highway Patrol**; Caltrans, District 8; Air Resources Board, Transportation Projects; State Lands Commission; Caltrans, Division of Transportation Planning

Date Received: 3/4/2005 **Start of Review:** 3/4/2005 **End of Review:** 4/4/2005

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